Prof. A. Sreedhara Menon

Born on December 18, 1925 at Ernakulam. Completed his M.A. Degree in History as a private candidate from the University of Madras with first rank in 1948. Went to Harvard University on a Fulbright Travel Grant and a Smith-Mundt Scholarship and secured masters degree in Political Science from there with specialisation in International Relations. Worked in various capacities such as professor of History, State Editor of the Kerala Gazetteers, Registrar of the University of Kerala and UGC visiting Professor in the University of Calicut. Held many other positions during his eventful career. Apart from compiling eight District Gazetteers of Kerala he was written more than 25 books in English and Malayalam.
My aim in writing this book is to make available to the general reader and the university, student a brief general survey of the history of Kerala through the ages. The scope and contents of the various chapters of the book have been so planned as to make each chapter self-contained even at the risk of some repetition. A Malayalam version of this book is also being brought out simultaneously. In this connection, I would like to make it clear that this book does not represent an attempt on my part to write a comprehensive history of Kerala. On the other hand, it only provides the general framework within which I hope to write such a history, on my own initiative, at a future date.

I have given equal attention in this book to all the three periods of Kerala History- Ancient, Medieval, and Modern. In writing the chapters on the ancient and early medieval periods in which an attempt is made to present a continuous history of Kerala from the Sangam Age to the Portuguese period, the works of Prof. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, published in Malayalam during the last ten years, have been of invaluable help. The works of scholars like Sardar K. M. Panikkar and Dr. T. I. Poonen provided useful material for the history of the Portuguese and Dutch periods. A large number of works written by other eminent authors in the field have also been consulted. The select Bibliography given at the end of this book would give an idea of the scope and extent of my enquiries and studies.

I may avail myself of this opportunity to acknowledge with thanks the very valuable help I received from Sri Tirunellur Karunakaran, Malayalam Department, University College, Trivandrum, in writing the relevant sections dealing with the various branches of modern Malayalam literature in Chapter XXX on “Literature and Arts”.

I would be untrue to my conscience if I do not place on record the invaluable assistance I received from my wife, Mrs. Sarojini Menon, M.A., in the various stages of the works connected with the writing and publication of the book. She took considerable pains in writing down the manuscript copy and preparing the matter for the press. My strain in considerably lessened by the ungrudging help rendered by her at every stage.
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